

Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) of UNHCR's Cash Assistance in Romania

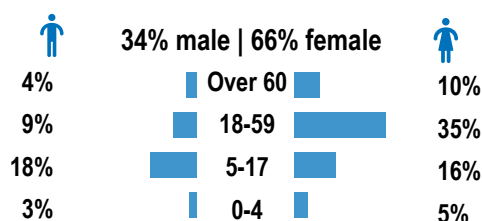
Introduction and methodology

As of 23 August 2022, a total of 6,865,625 people have arrived from Ukraine into neighbouring countries.¹ According to the latest figures, 1,611,068 people have crossed into Romania from the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine since the 24 February, with around 87,066 remaining in the country.²

In response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees in neighboring countries, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has organized cash distributions in coordination under Regional Refugee Plan (RRP) for Ukraine situation and government of Romania.³ By the 20th of July, over 9,000 refugees have benefitted from the assistance (first and second payment) that consists of a one time monthly payment of 568 RON per person (about 120 USD), for a maximum period of three months, equivalent to the amount provided to refugees by Government of Romania.^{3,4} Eligible households receive the money via preferred modality, either transferred into their Romanian bank account or a SMS containing a pick-up code notifying them that cash assistance is ready, following collection at any Smith & Smith (cash transfer) locations providing they show identity documents and the unique pick-up code. More information on eligibility criteria and the distribution process can be found [here](#).

As part of UNHCR's efforts to monitor the quality of their service delivery and to ensure accountability to Persons of Concern (PoC), IMPACT conducted a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM) of UNHCR's cash assistance in Romania. IMPACT interviewed via phone calls a total of 130 beneficiary refugee households, randomly selected from the UNHCR beneficiary lists, between the 9th and the 17th of August 2022. The sample is representative of the beneficiary refugee population from Ukraine living in the country at the time of data collection at a 95% confidence level with a 10% margin of error. It included a 40% buffer due to the high fluidity of the refugee population. A minority of the interviewed households had already received a second payment at the time of data collection which may influence some of the findings.

Assessed household demographics



Average household size: 3



Average cash assistance received per household: 1,739 RON

Key findings

- **Overall, results indicate that cash assistance is well adapted to the context**, easy to spend in the local markets and supermarkets and that receiving or spending the assistance did not pose any threat or challenges to beneficiaries. It allowed them to cover a major part of their basic needs and had a significant impact on their situation.
- **Cash assistance was most frequently reported to be used to cover for basic needs, such as food (92%), clothes/shoes (31%), hygiene items (23%) and health expenses (22%).**⁵ Nearly three quarters of households (71%) reported they spent all the cash assistance at the time of data collection, while less than one quarter (13%) had spent more than half of the cash assistance.
- **A vast majority of households (95%) reported that they were able to find the items and/or services that they needed in the markets and/or shops.** Almost all the households (97%) reported that items and/or services were available and the quality was in line with households expectations. Price increases were, however, noted.⁶
- **No household reported feeling unsafe or at risk of harm due to cash assistance.** They felt safe during all stages of the assistance cycle e.g. when going to enroll or get the card, when going to spend or withdraw the money, for the fact of keeping the money at home, or any other difficulties related to the cash assistance.⁷ People could access and use the cash easily, although (6) households reported having difficulties withdrawing or accessing the cash because of wrong/forgotten pin code or could not enter code themselves (4) and poor service at the bank/post office (2).
- **Refugees reported that the cash helped significantly with their needs**, with 91% of households meeting half or more of their basic needs at the time of data collection.
- **Majority of the interviewed households (87%) indicate they intend to stay in their current location** in the next three months.
- **About four in ten households (39%) reported that at least one member is currently working.**¹³

¹ UNHCR, [Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation](#).

² UNHCR, [Operational Data Portal – Ukraine Refugee Situation](#), Romania.

³ UNHCR, [Cash assistance programme for refugees in Romania](#), 24 August.

⁴ 1 RON = 0.203 USD, exchange rate consulted on the 24 August in <https://www.xe.com/>.

⁵ Multiple answers could be selected.

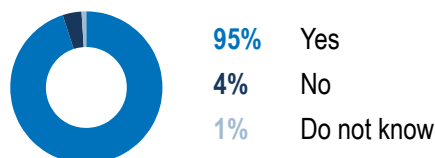
⁶ It should be noted that the link between the cash assistance and increase in prices in the community is weak at the moment of data collection due to increase in price in utilities. As such, interpretation of this specific finding should be treated with utmost caution.

⁷ Two respondents selected "other risks", answers which could not be verified therefore were removed from the sample.

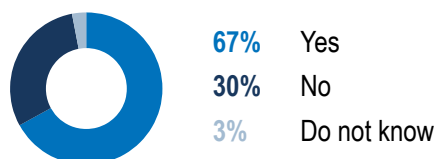
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Reception of Cash Assistance

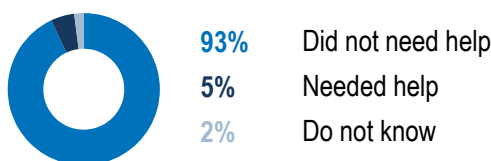
Proportion of households reporting having received the amount of cash assistance they were expecting:⁸



Proportion of households reporting having received the cash assistance the day they were expecting it:⁹

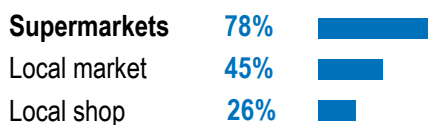


Proportion of households reporting they needed help to withdraw or spend the cash assistance:



Among the **5% (7)** of households that reported they needed help to withdraw or spend the cash assistance, the most frequently reported reason was that the place of withdrawal of cash was not accessible (**3**). The households most commonly reported having received help from a family member (**3**). **0** households reported having to pay for this help.¹⁰

Top 3 most frequently reported places where households went to spend the cash assistance:⁹



92% of households reported that the household member registered as recipient in the UNHCR distribution list was in possession of the SIM card at the moment of data collection.

⁸ Of the 4% (5 households) reporting not receiving the amount of cash assistance, for one it was due to the fact their application was made only 1 week prior to the survey. The household was referred to UNHCR, for follow up.

⁹ For a large part of the 30% of households reporting not having received the assistance on the expected day, the delay was mentioned only in reference to the third payment. A part of them reported having received first and second payment on time, yet the third one has now been delayed with over twenty days. This indicator can only be considered as indicative. This was a multiple choice question, therefore findings may exceed 100%.

Non-Compliance Cases

1 household reported not having received any cash assistance despite being on the beneficiary list.⁸

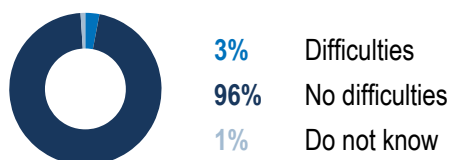
0 households reported they had to pay additional money or do favours to withdraw or spend the cash.

Difficulties Faced by Beneficiaries

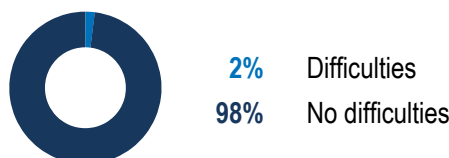
0 households reported feeling unsafe at risk of harm in any of the stages related to cash assistance reception (e.g. when going to enroll or get the card, when going to spend or withdraw the money, for the fact of keeping the money at home, or any other difficulties related to the cash assistance).¹¹

0 households reported having faced difficulties in accessing and spending the cash because the member registered as recipient was not available.^{8,11}

Proportion of households reporting having faced difficulties in accessing and spending the cash because they had the wrong PIN code, forgot it or could not enter the PIN code themselves:^{8,11}



Proportion of households reporting having faced difficulties in withdrawing the money because of poor service at the bank/post office etc.^{8,11}



0 households reported having faced difficulties in spending the cash because market, shop trader or wholesaler refused to serve them.^{8,11}

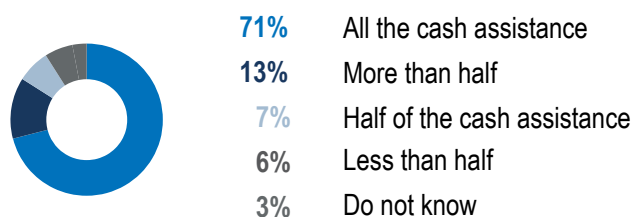
¹⁰ As the subset for this indicator is below 30 households, figures are reported as numbers and should be only considered as indicative.

¹¹ Due to inconsistencies between responses that could not be verified, there were 2 entries referring to risks and problems experienced that were not taken into consideration.

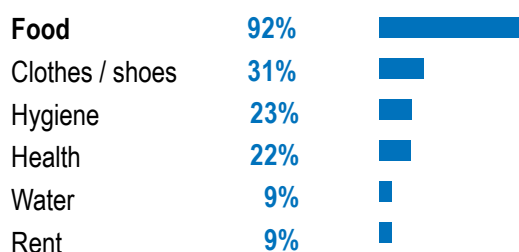
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Cash Assistance Expenditure

Proportion of households by share of cash assistance that was reportedly already spent at the time of data collection:



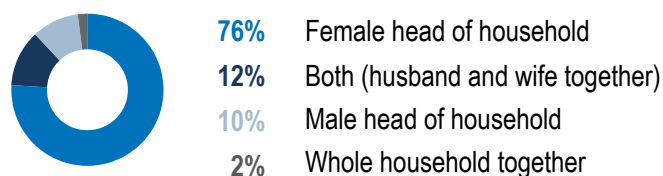
Proportion of households by most frequently reported items and services where they spent cash assistance on:⁶



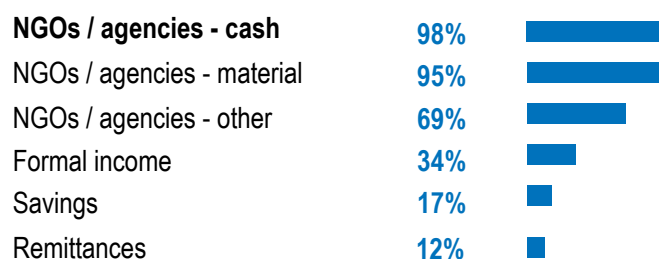
Proportion of households by items and services where they reportedly spent their cash assistance on, by order of importance:

Items / services	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th choice	5th choice
Food	74%	22%	14%	0%	0%
Clothes / shoes	4%	22%	32%	0%	0%
Hygiene items	2%	18%	19%	17%	50%
Health costs	7%	18%	8%	17%	0%
Utilities and bills	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Rent	8%	1%	0%	17%	0%
Transport	1%	6%	14%	0%	0%
Water	0%	6%	14%	0%	0%
Household items	0%	2%	5%	0%	0%
Education	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%
Fuel for cooking or heating	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Debt repayment	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Assets for livelihood activity	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Entertainment	0%	3%	3%	17%	50%
Gave some to other family members/relatives/friends	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Legal assistance	0%	1%	0%	0%	0%
Shelter repair	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%
Other	0%	0%	1%	0%	0%

Proportion of households reporting on the person in the household deciding the most how the money should be spent:

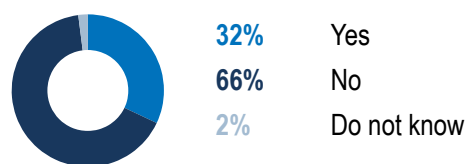


Top 6 of most frequently reported sources of income or support other than UNHCR cash assistance in the last 30 days prior to data collection:



All respondents reported that they have at least one other source of income or support. **NGOs/agencies (cash, material or other)** support was noted in all responses, in combination with other forms of income or support.^{8,9}

Proportion of households reporting they saved a part of the cash assistance:



Among the **32% (42)** of households that reportedly saved a part of the cash assistance, **57% (24)** reported that they saved it in their own account.^{8,9}

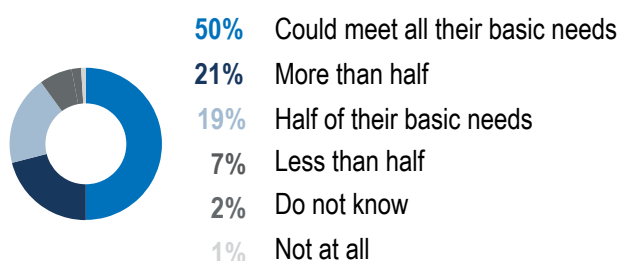
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Impact of Cash Assistance on Sense of Security

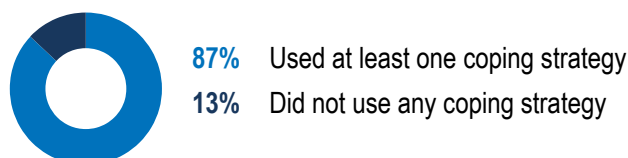
Almost all households reported that the cash assistance had a significant effect on their situation in relation to the following:

	Significantly	Moderately	Slightly	No effect
Improved their living conditions	86%	9%	4%	1%
Reduced financial burden	83%	13%	3%	1%
Reduced feelings of stress	85%	9%	4%	2%

Proportion of household by share of basic needs they reportedly were able to meet at the time of data collection:



Proportion of households reporting they used one or more negative livelihood coping strategy in the 30 days before data collection:



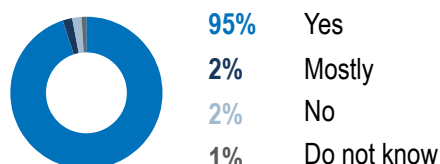
Top 3 of most frequently reported livelihood coping strategies, among households (113) having reportedly used at least one in the 30 days before data collection:

Stop a child from attending school	62% (70)	<div style="width: 62%;"></div>
Reduce essential expenditures in order to meet their food needs	15% (17)	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>
Take out new loans or borrowed money	6% (7)	<div style="width: 6%;"></div>

Most frequent livelihood coping strategy used in the last 7 days before data collection was relying on less preferred and less expensive food, with an average of 3 times within the 7 day time frame.

Availability of products needed at an affordable price in the markets

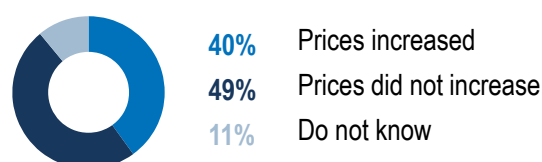
Proportion of households reporting they were able to find the items/services they needed in the markets and/or shops:



5 households reported they were not able to find specific items or services: specific medication (3), dentist (1), and specific food (1).

The majority of households (97%) reported that needed items and/or services were available in the market and the quality was in line with the households' expectations.

Proportion of households reporting an increase of prices in the market for some items/services in the last 30 days, at the time of data collection:



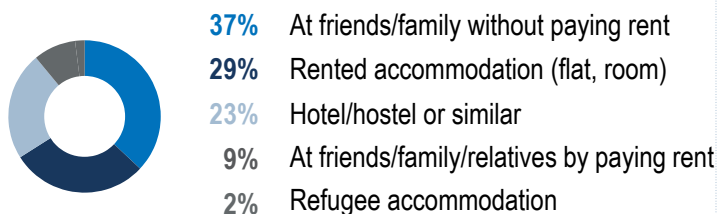
Top 4 of most reported items/services, among households (52) having which noticed increase of prices in the last 30 days, at the time of data collection:

Food products	71% (37)	<div style="width: 71%;"></div>
All products	15% (8)	<div style="width: 15%;"></div>
Medicines	6% (3)	<div style="width: 6%;"></div>
Children supplies	4% (2)	<div style="width: 4%;"></div>

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Housing Situation, Movement Intentions and Employment

Proportion of households by reported housing situation:

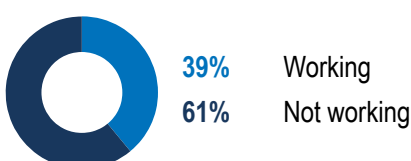


Only 7% (9) of households reported planning to change housing situation. The three most frequently reported reasons were that they are having difficulties with their landlord (3), they cannot afford the rent (2), followed by households being evicted (2).⁸

Proportion of households by reported movement intentions in the three months after data collection:

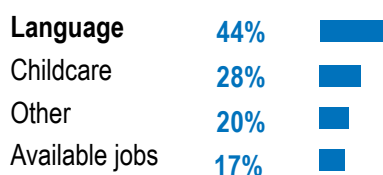
Majority of households (87%) want to remain in present location, whilst 13% (17) have other intentions: want to return to area (oblast) of origin (5), do not know and are waiting to make a decision (4), want to move to another country (3), and prefer not to say (3). The condition to return is temporary ceasefire or reduction of conflict (1).¹²

Proportion of households where the member registered as recipient of the cash assistance, or another member is currently working:¹³



Among the 61% (80) of households not working, some have the intention to work (31), whilst the rest do not have any intentions to work (46). Some are retired hence they do not have any intention to work (13).¹³

Top 4 of most frequently reported challenges to accessing the labour market:¹³

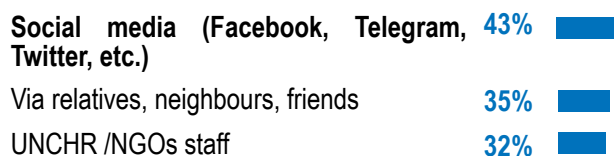


¹² Due to a technical issue, 16 interviews were not considered for final findings. As a result, findings related to this indicator are indicative only.

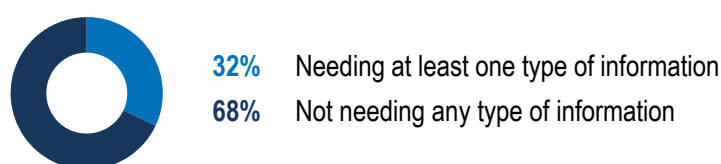
¹³ Due to a technical issue, 33 interviews were not considered for the final findings. As a result, findings related to this indicator are indicative only.

Complaints and Communication

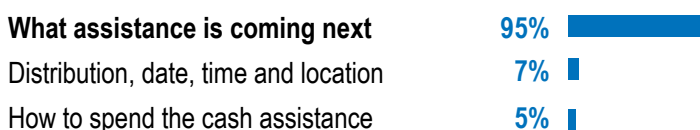
Top 3 of most frequently reported channels where households heard about UNHCR cash assistance:



Proportion of households that reported needing one or more information about cash assistance:⁶



Top 3 of most frequently reported type of information needed, among the 32% (42) of households that requested at least one of them:⁸



Only 34% of households reported knowing one or more ways how to report complaints and feedback on the cash assistance from UNHCR, while more than half (66%) did not know how to.

Main shared ways to report complaints and feedback, among the 34% (44) of households that reported knowing at least one:⁸



Proportion of households by reported preferred modality for future cash assistance:

